

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for enabling users of a network to create, store, and provide access to relationships among document objects stored on the network, the method comprising the steps of:

- allowing creation of a link relationship between a first document object and a second document object;
- storing the link relationship in one or more link directories; and
- accessing one or more link relationships stored in the one or more link directories using a unique identifier for a document object, wherein the one or more link directories are separate from the document object.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the accessing step comprises providing access only to authorized users.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, further comprising authorizing users of the network to perform the allowing, storing and accessing steps.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the allowing step comprises:

- locating a first document object;
- locating a second document object related to the first document object; and
- creating a link relationship which references the first document object and the second document object.

Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 4, wherein one or more of the steps of the method are accomplished by automated procedures not requiring interaction with the user.

Claim 6 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the storing step comprises:

- storing a link relationship entry in a link relationship table, wherein the link relationship entry comprises fields including a first link reference to the first document object and a second link reference to the second document object;
- assigning link relationship attributes to the link relationship entry; and

setting a directional indicator for the link relationship entry.

Claim 7 (original): The method of claim 6, wherein the step of storing the link relationship in one or more link directories further comprises:

storing the first link reference to the first document object in a document object table;

assigning document object attributes to the first link reference associated with the first document object;

storing the second link reference to the second document object in a document object table; and

assigning document object attributes to the second link reference associated with the second document object.

Claim 8 (original): The method of claim 7, wherein one or more of the link relationship attributes are set; and a directional indicator for the link relationship attribute is set by associating one document object attribute for the first link reference with one document object attribute for the second link reference.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method of claim 4 further comprising displaying to a user a link reference to a document object related to a document object the user is currently accessing, wherein the link reference displayed to the user is determined by identifying those link relationships stored in the one or more link directories that include a link reference to a network address of the currently accessed document object.

Claim 10 (original): The method of claim 9, wherein the displaying step comprises displaying more than one link reference from one or more link directories.

Claim 11 (original): The method of claim 9, wherein the displaying step comprises sorting and presenting one or more link references by the one or more link directories storing the link references.

Claim 12 (original): The method of claim 11, wherein the displaying step comprises sorting and presenting the one or more link references by attributes of the link relationships and link references.

Claim 13 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the method is used on one or more of: a private network, a closed network, a public network, and a private network that is connected to a public network.

Claim 14 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more link directories are accessible only by a specific individual user of a client device.

Claim 15 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein the one or more link directories may be stored on a server connected to the network by means of a secure connection.

Claim 16 (original): The method of claim 1 further comprising assigning attributes to the link relationship established between the first document object and the second document object.

Claim 17 (original): The method of claim 16 further comprising assigning attributes to a first link reference to the first document object and a second link reference to the second document object.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The method of claim 16 wherein the link relationship stored in the one or more link directories may be organized, sorted, searched and filtered by one or more attributes assigned to the link relationship.

Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 17 wherein the link references stored in the one or more link directories may be organized, sorted, searched and filtered by one or more attributes assigned to the link references.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, further comprising displaying one or more link references to document objects on the network, the displaying comprising:

selecting the displayed link references for display based on a link relationship to a currently displayed document object; and
filtering the displayed link references by attributes.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A system for establishing and providing access to relationships between document objects stored on a network wherein the relationship between a first document object and a second document object may be created by an individual user of the network and provided to other users of the network, the system comprising:

one or more client devices that access document objects stored on the network and allow creation of link relationships between document objects; and

one or more servers that store the link relationships created by the client devices, allow access to one or more stored link relationships using a unique identifier for a document object and transmit one or more link relationships and link references to the client devices, wherein the one or more stored link relationships are separate from the document object.

Claim 22 (original): The system of claim 21, wherein the one or more servers filter and sort the link relationships and link references before transmitting the link relationships and link references to the client devices.

Claim 23 (original): The system of claim 21, wherein the client devices filter and sort the link relationships and link references after the link relationships and link references are transmitted to the client devices from the one or more servers.

Claim 24 (original): The system of claim 21, wherein the one or more servers comprise:

one or more link directories that store the link relationships created on the one or more client devices;

a server manager module that coordinates communication between the one or more link directories, a user directory, a database of user profile data, and the one or more client devices if those client devices are requesting services from the server; and

a user data store that stores information regarding authorized users of the servers and link directories.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The system of claim 24, wherein the user data store comprises:

a user directory, the user directory comprising one or more user data records containing personal identifying information and information regarding which of the one or more link directories and the one or more servers a user may be authorized to access; ,

a user profile store, the user profile store comprising one or more user profile records each containing one or more user profiles for each authorized user of the servers and link directories; and

a user account store, the user account store comprising one or more user account records each containing usage data for each authorized user of the servers and link directories.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The system of claim 21, wherein the one or more client devices comprise:

- a client tool, wherein the client tool comprises a graphic user interface display;
- a rendering tool that renders and displays document objects, the rendering tool comprising:
 - a graphic user interface display; and
 - a document object network address; and
- a network access tool that connects the rendering tool and the client tool to the network.

Claim 27 (original): The system of claim 26, wherein the document object network address comprises a Uniform Resource Locator.

Claim 28 (original): The system of claim 26, wherein the client device further comprises one of:

- one or more link directories that store the link relationships;
- a communications module that coordinates communication between the one or more link directories, a user directory, a database of user profile data, and the one or more client devices; and
- a user data store that stores information regarding authorized users of the client tool.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The system of claim 24, wherein the one or more link directories comprise:

- a link relationship table comprising a plurality of link relationship entries, the link relationship entries comprising:
 - a first field comprising a first link reference to a first document object of the link relationship;
 - a second field comprising a second link reference to a second document object of the link relationship;
 - one or more link relationship attributes providing information that places the link relationship in a context useful to the user; and
 - a directional indicator that indicates whether the link relationship between the first link reference to the first document object and the second link reference to the second document object applies in either direction or in both directions.

Claim 30 (original): The system of claim 29, wherein the directional indicator comprises a plurality of directional indicator fields, each directional indicator field corresponding to one of the one or more link relationship attributes and indicating whether the corresponding link relationship attribute applies in one direction or in both directions between the first link reference to the first document object and the second link reference to the second document object.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The system of claim 29, wherein the one or more link directories further comprise:

a document object table comprising a plurality of link reference entries, the link reference entries comprising:

a network address of the document object on the network indicated by the link reference entry wherein the unique identifier for a document object is the network address of the document object; and

one or more document object attributes providing information that places the document object indicated by the link reference entry in a context that is useful to the user.

Claim 32 (original): The system of claim 31, wherein the network address comprises a Uniform Resource Locator.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The system of claim 31, wherein the link reference entries further comprise a listing of all link relationship entries in which the network address of the document object indicated by the link reference entry is present in the first field or the second field of the link relationship entries.

Claim 34 (original): The system of claim 33, wherein the network address comprises a Uniform Resource Locator.

Claim 35 (previously presented): The system of claim 29, wherein a network address of the document object on the network includes information necessary to specify the location of the document object on the network.

Claim 36 (original): The system of claim 35, wherein the network address comprises a Uniform Resource Locator.

Claim 37 (original): The system of claim 21, wherein the network is one or more of: a private network, a closed network, a public network, and a private network that is connected to a public network.

Claim 38 (original): The system of claim 21, wherein the one or more link directories are accessible only by a specific individual user of a client device.

Claim 39 (original): The system of claim 21, wherein the one or more link directories may be stored on a server connected to the network by means of a secure connection.

Claim 40 (currently amended): A computer readable medium upon which is embedded instructions for carrying out a method for enabling users of a network to create, store, and provide access to relationships among document objects stored on the network, the method comprising the steps of:

allowing creation of a link relationship between a first document object and a second document object;

storing the link relationship in one or more link directories; and

accessing one or more link relationships stored in the one or more link directories using a unique identifier for a document object, wherein the one or more link directories are separate from the document object.

Claim 41 (previously presented): The computer readable medium of claim 40, wherein the accessing step comprises providing access only to authorized users.

Claim 42 (previously presented): The computer readable medium of claim 40, further comprising authorizing users of the network to perform the allowing, storing and accessing steps.

Claim 43 (previously presented): The computer readable medium of claim 40, wherein the allowing step comprises:

a first user locating a first document object;

the first user locating a second document object related to the first document object in some manner determined by the first user; and

the first user creating a link relationship which references the first document object and the second document object.

Claim 44 (original): The computer readable medium of claim 43, wherein one or more of the steps of the method are accomplished by automated procedures not requiring interaction with the user.

Claim 45 (original): The computer readable medium of claim 40, wherein the storing step comprises:

storing a link relationship entry in a link relationship table, wherein the link relationship entry comprises fields including a first link reference to the first document object and a second link reference to the second document object;
assigning link relationship attributes to the link relationship entry; and
setting a directional indicator for the link relationship entry.

Claim 46 (original): The computer readable medium of claim 45, wherein the step of storing the link relationship in one or more link directories further comprises:

storing the first link reference to the first document object in a document object table;
assigning document object attributes to the first link reference associated with the first document object;
storing the second link reference to the second document object in a document object table; and
assigning document object attributes to the second link reference associated with the second document object.

Claim 47 (original): The computer readable medium of claim 46, wherein one or more of the link relationship attributes are set; and a directional indicator for the link relationship attribute is set by associating one document object attribute for the first link reference with one document object attribute for the second link reference.

Claim 48 (original): The computer readable medium of claim 43 further comprising:

selecting a link reference to a first document object related to a second document object that a second user is currently accessing, by identifying those link relationships, stored in the one or more link directories, that include a link reference to a network address of the second document object the second user is currently accessing; and
displaying the selected link reference to the second user.

Claim 49 (original): The computer readable medium of claim 48, wherein the displaying step comprises displaying more than one link reference from one or more link directories.

Claim 50 (original): The method of claim 48, wherein the displaying step comprises sorting and presenting one or more link references by the one or more link directories storing the link references.

Claim 51 (original): The method of claim 50, wherein the displaying step comprises sorting and presenting the one or more link references by attributes of the link relationships and link references.

Claim 52 (original): The computer readable medium of claim 40, wherein the one or more link directories are accessible only by a specific individual user of a client device.

Claim 53 (original): The computer readable medium of claim 40 wherein the one or more link directories may be stored on a server connected to the network by means of a secure connection.

Claim 54 (original): The computer readable medium of claim 40 further comprising assigning attributes to the link relationship established between the first document object and the second document object.

Claim 55 (original): The computer readable medium of claim 54 further comprising assigning attributes to a first link reference to the first document object and a second link reference to the second document object.

Claim 56 (original): The computer readable medium of claim 54 wherein the link relationship stored in the one or more link directories may be organized, sorted, searched and filtered by one or more attributes assigned to the link relationships.

Claim 57 (original): The computer readable medium of claim 55 wherein the link references stored in the one or more link directories may be organized, sorted, searched and filtered by one or more attributes assigned to the link references.